blueknot
empowering recovery from complex trauma

Educational Workshop for Family, Friends, Partners and Loved Ones of Adult Survivors

Participant Booklet

Training, Practice and Organisational Change

Blue Knot Foundation

Leading national not-for-profit organisation empowering adults to recover and build resilience from complex trauma.

Welcome to the Educational Workshop for Family, Friends, Partners and Loved Ones of Adult Survivors.

In this booklet you will find the slides, information on key concepts and links to important services and further training opportunities.

We welcome feedback so we welcome you on the completion of your training to complete a brief survey at the link below.

Slide 1

Blue Knot Foundation
Trauma Awareness for Family, Friends, Partners and Loved Ones of Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma
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Slide 2

We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects of the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hope of their people.
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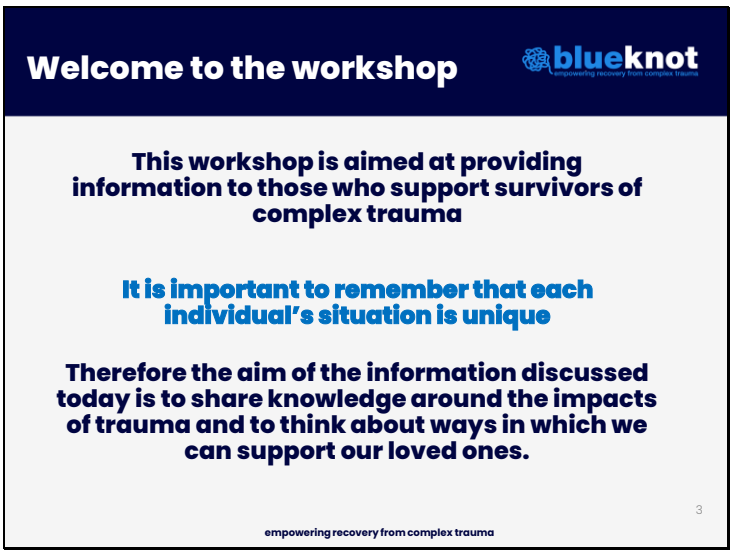
Slide 3


Welcome to the workshop
blueknot
This workshop is aimed at providing information to those who support survivors of complex trauma
It is important to remember that each individual's situation is unique
Therefore the aim of the information discussed today is to share knowledge around the impacts of trauma and to think about ways in which we can support our loved ones.
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Slide 4

Safety and Self Care
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The content of this training material may raise a range of emotions, including sadness or discomfort, as you view and hear from some of the participants from the film speak about their experiences.
If the content triggers an emotional response that is overwhelming, it is important to seek support. We ask that you take care of yourself throughout the training workshop, and if you need a break, please take one.
For support:
Blue Knot Helpline – 1300 657 380 9am-5pm 7 days EST
Lifeline – 13 11 14 24hrs
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Slide 5

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the impacts of trauma on the body and the brain, and the way survivors adapt and respond to triggers
- Acquire the skills to use a trauma sensitive approach with survivor/s and build healthy relationships
- Understand that recovery is possible, how and where to find support for themselves and the survivor in their lives
- Develop strategies for self-care

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Introduction to Clips

This documentary is about a Western Sydney security guard and part-time ghost hunter—Jason King— who has spent two decades searching for his father to reconcile his fractured memories and piece together his past.

When his search converges with a police investigation, a family secret is exposed — forcing him to confront a brutal past so that he can reclaim his future.

The movie can be downloaded for viewing at ghosthunterthemovie.com where other resources are also available for use.

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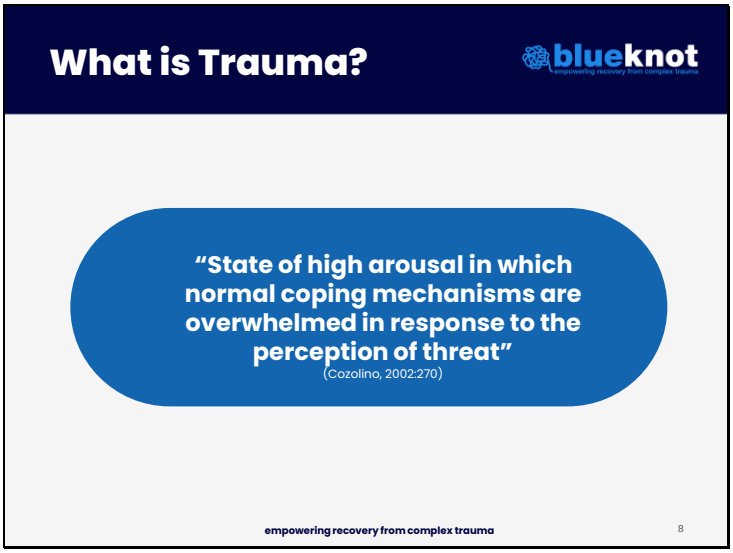
What is Trauma?
blueknot
"State of high arousal in which normal coping mechanisms are overwhelmed in response to the perception of threat"
(Cozolino, 2002:270)
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What is Complex Trauma?
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"…. In contrast to 'single incident' trauma, complex trauma is cumulative, repetitive and largely interpersonally generated, and occurs in the context of family and intimate relationships…"
(Blue Knot Foundation Guidelines, 2019)
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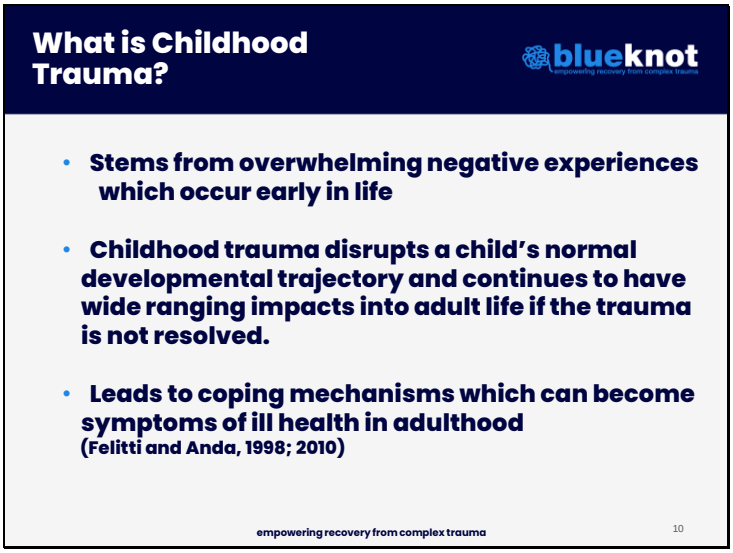
What is Childhood Trauma?
blueknot
Stems from overwhelming negative experiences which occur early in life
Childhood trauma disrupts a child's normal developmental trajectory and continues to have wide ranging impacts into adult life if the trauma is not resolved.
Leads to coping mechanisms which can become symptoms of ill health in adulthood
(Felitti and Anda, 1998; 2010)
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Abuse is a form of childhood trauma
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The World Health Organization ([WHO], 2006, p. 9) defines child abuse and neglect as:
All forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

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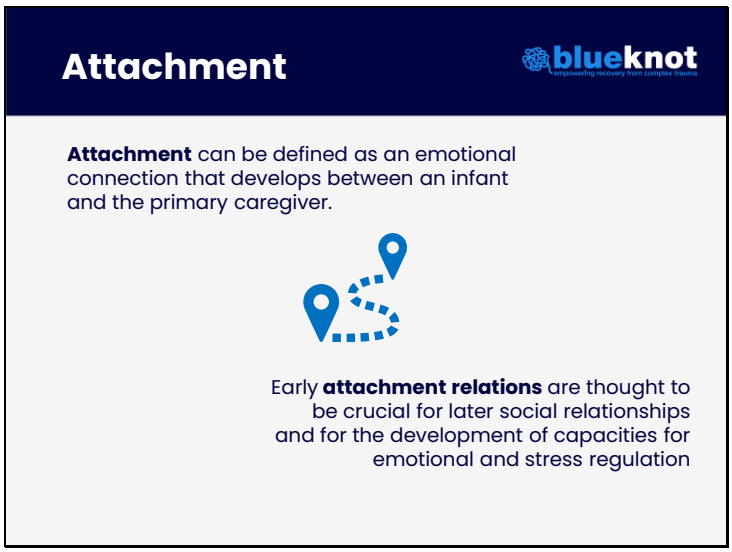
Attachment
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Attachment can be defined as an emotional connection that develops between an infant and the primary caregiver.
Early attachment relations are thought to be crucial for later social relationships and for the development of capacities for emotional and stress regulation

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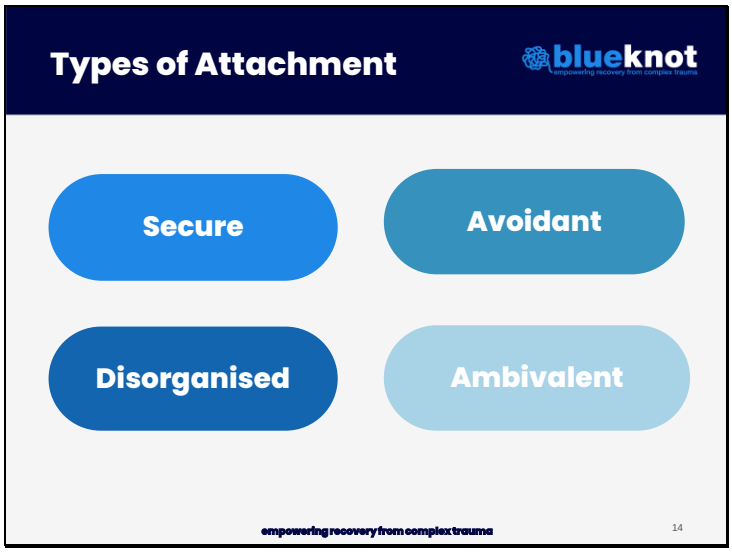

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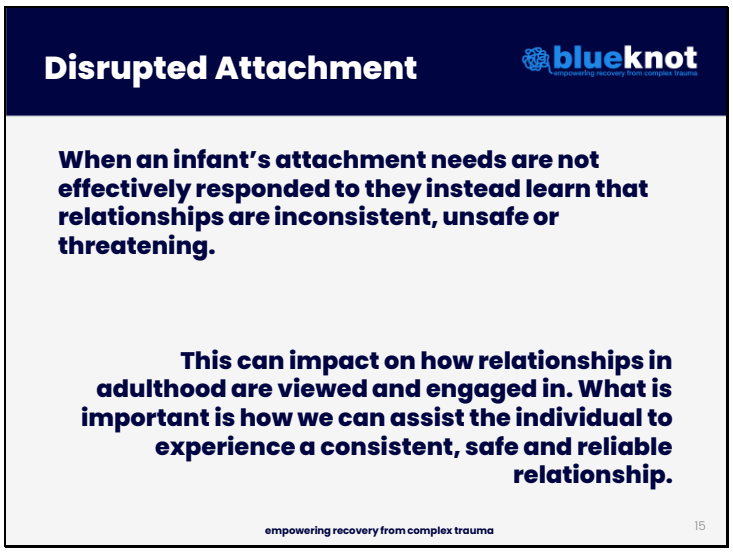
Disrupted Attachment
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When an infant's attachment needs are not effectively responded to they instead learn that relationships are inconsistent, unsafe or threatening.
This can impact on how relationships in adulthood are viewed and engaged in. What is important is how we can assist the individual to experience a consistent, safe and reliable relationship.
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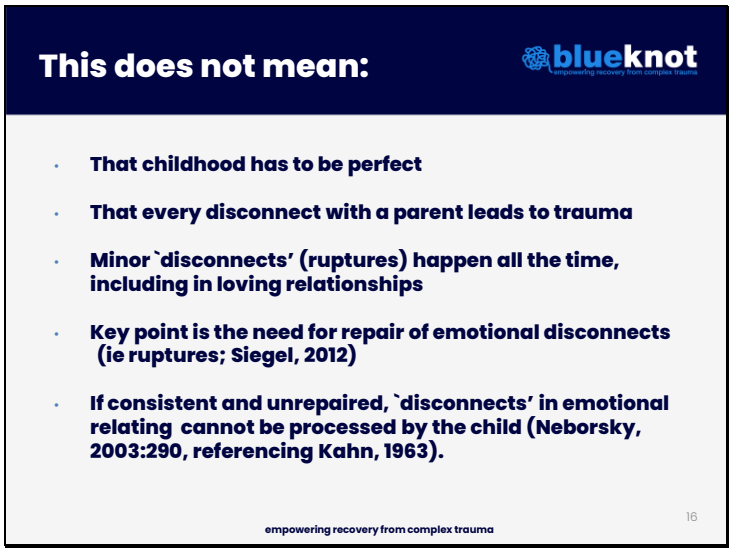
This does not mean:
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That childhood has to be perfect
That every disconnect with a parent leads to trauma
Minor `disconnects' (ruptures) happen all the time, including in loving relationships
Key point is the need for repair of emotional disconnects (ie ruptures; Siegel, 2012)
If consistent and unrepaired, `disconnects' in emotional relating cannot be processed by the child (Neborsky, 2003:290, referencing Kahn, 1963).
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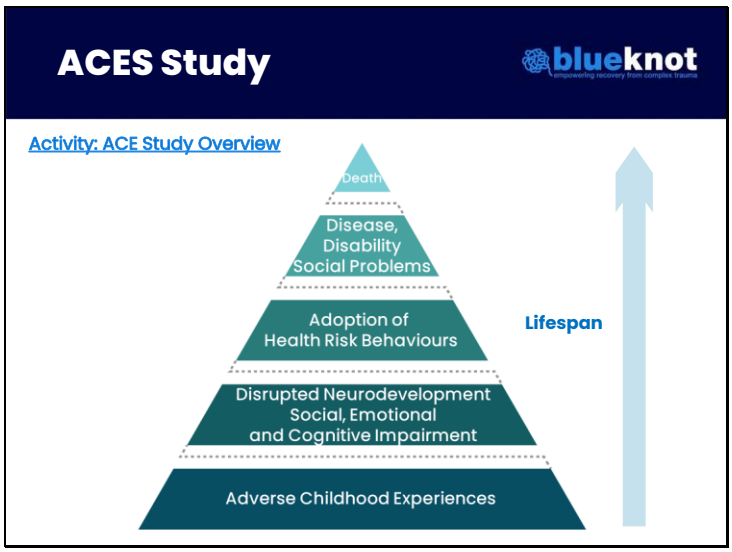

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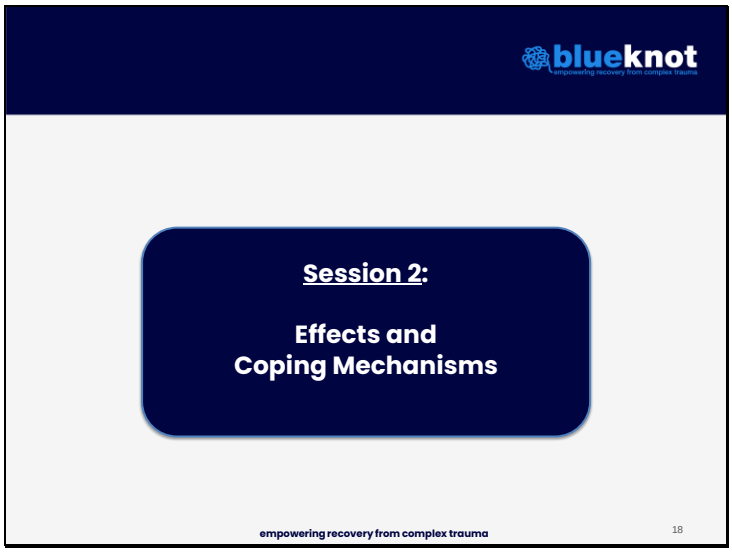

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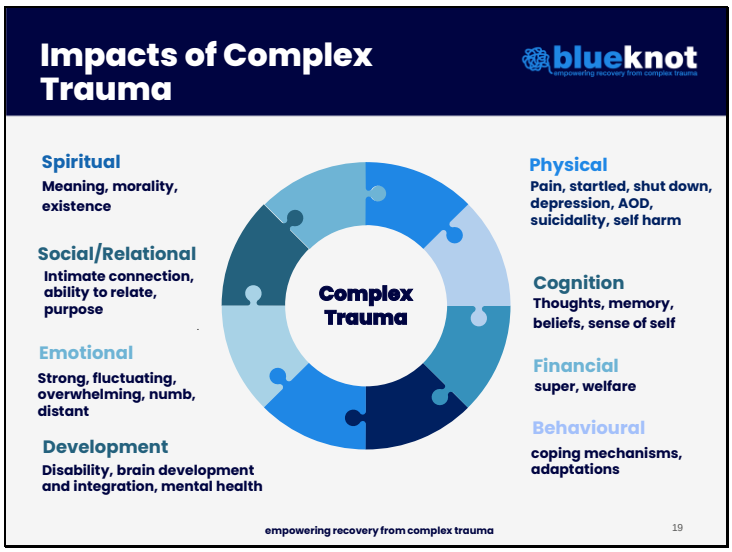

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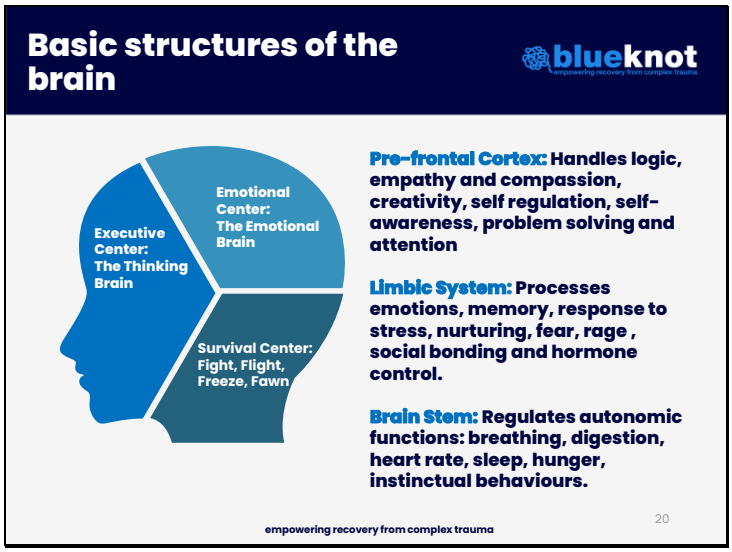
Basic structures of the brain
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Executive Center: The Thinking Brain
Emotional Center: The Emotional Brain
Survival Center: Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn
Pre-frontal Cortex: Handles logic, empathy and compassion, creativity, self regulation, self-awareness, problem solving and attention
Limbic System: Processes emotions, memory, response to stress, nurturing, fear, rage , social bonding and hormone control.
Brain Stem: Regulates autonomic functions: breathing, digestion, heart rate, sleep, hunger, instinctual behaviours.
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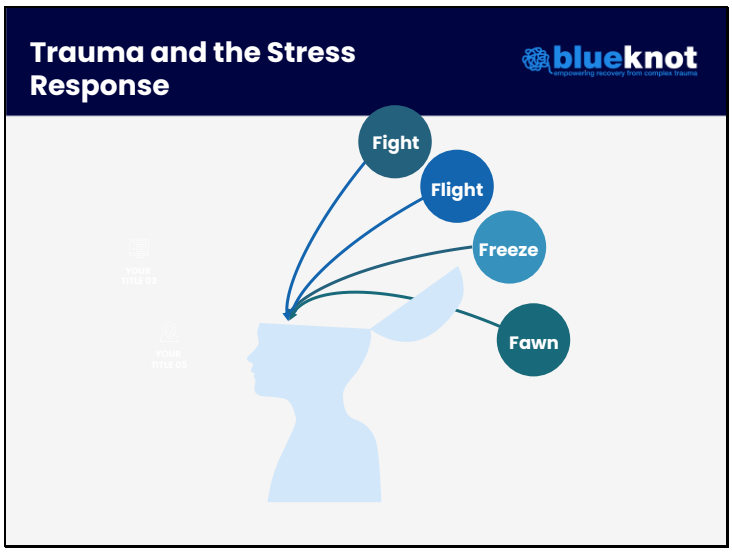

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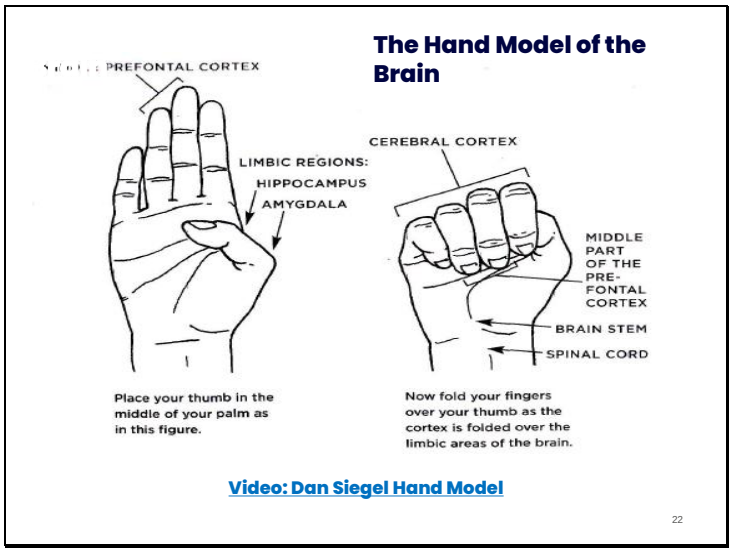
The Hand Model of the Brain
PREFONTAL CORTEX
LIMBIC REGIONS:
HIPPOCAMPUS
AMYGDALA
CEREBRAL CORTEX
MIDDLE PART OF THE PRE-FONTAL CORTEX
BRAIN STEM
SPINAL CORD
Place your thumb in the middle of your palm as in this figure.
Now fold your fingers over your thumb as the cortex is folded over the limbic areas of the brain.
Video: Dan Siegel Hand Model
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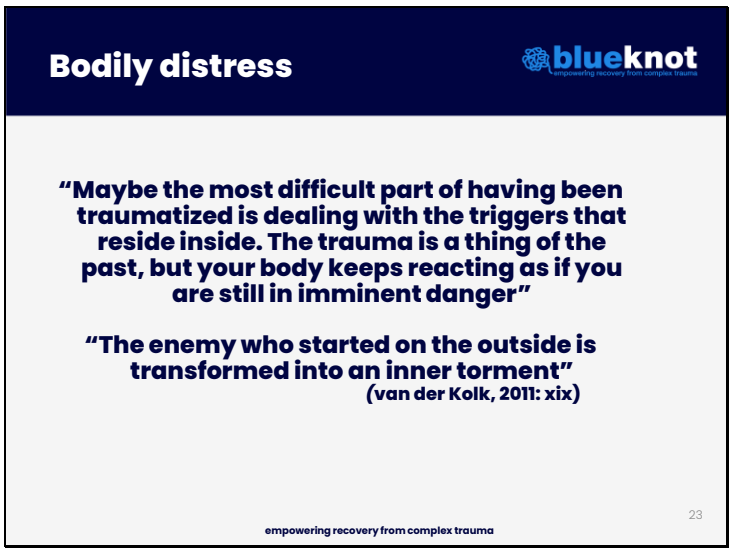
Bodily distress
blueknot
"Maybe the most difficult part of having been traumatized is dealing with the triggers that reside inside. The trauma is a thing of the past, but your body keeps reacting as if you are still in imminent danger"
"The enemy who started on the outside is transformed into an inner torment"
(van der Kolk, 2011: xix)
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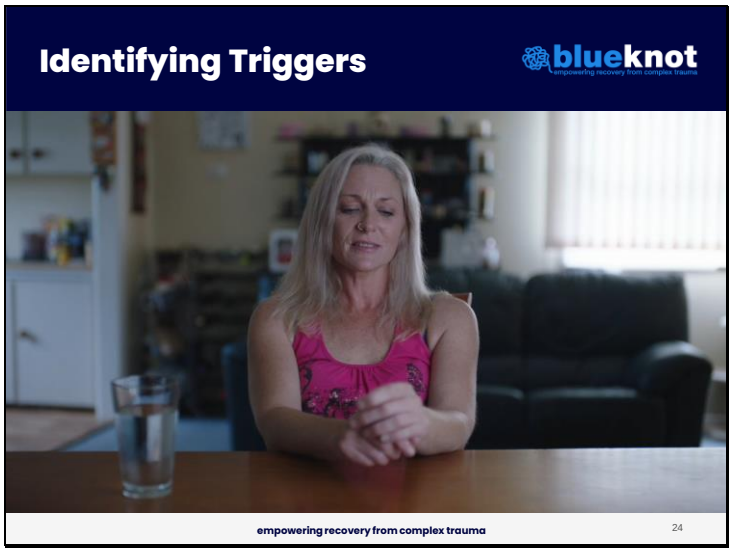

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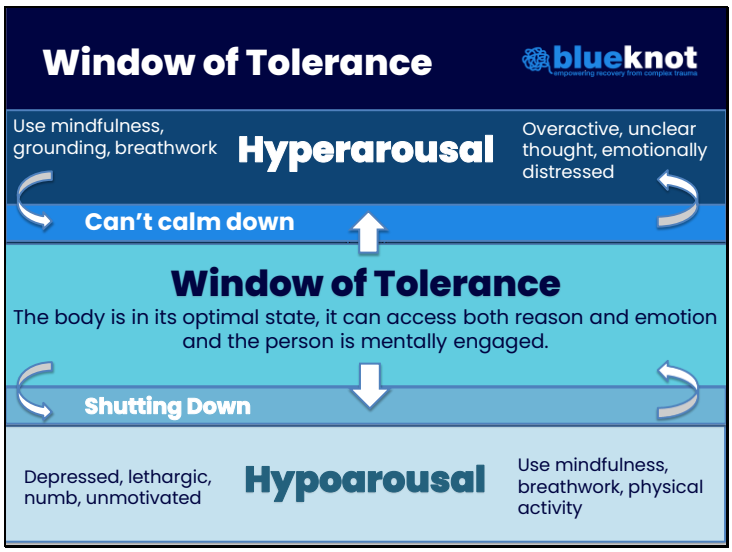
Window of Tolerance
blueknot
Use mindfulness, grounding, breathwork
Hyperarousal
Overactive, unclear thought, emotionally distressed
Can't calm down
Window of Tolerance
The body is in its optimal state, it can access both reason and emotion and the person is mentally engaged.
Shutting Down
Depressed, lethargic, numb, unmotivated
Hypoarousal
Use mindfulness, breathwork, physical activity

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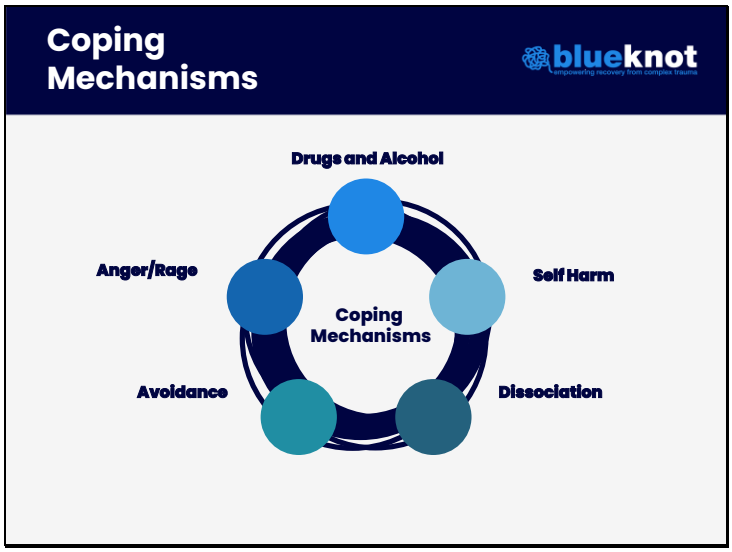

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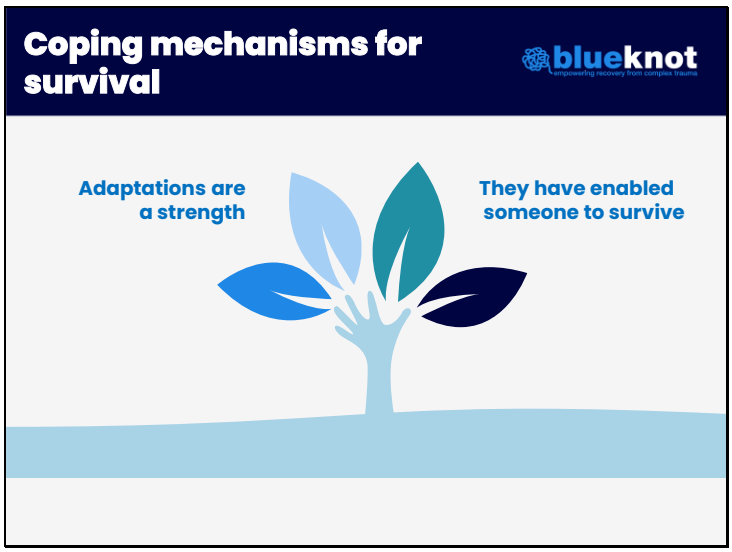

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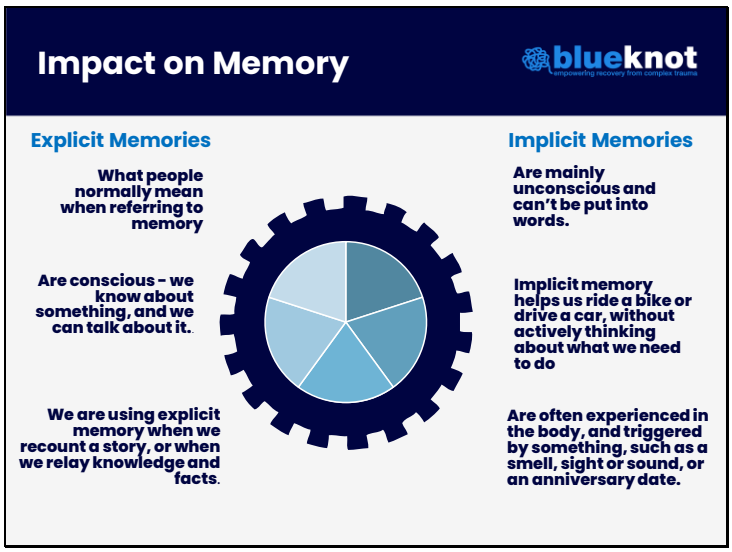
Impact on Memory
blueknot
Explicit Memories
What people normally mean when referring to memory
Are conscious - we know about something, and we can talk about it.
We are using explicit memory when we recount a story, or when we relay knowledge and facts.
Implicit Memories
Are mainly unconscious and can't be put into words.
Implicit memory helps us ride a bike or drive a car, without actively thinking about what we need to do
Are often experienced in the body, and triggered by something, such as a smell, sight or sound, or an anniversary date.

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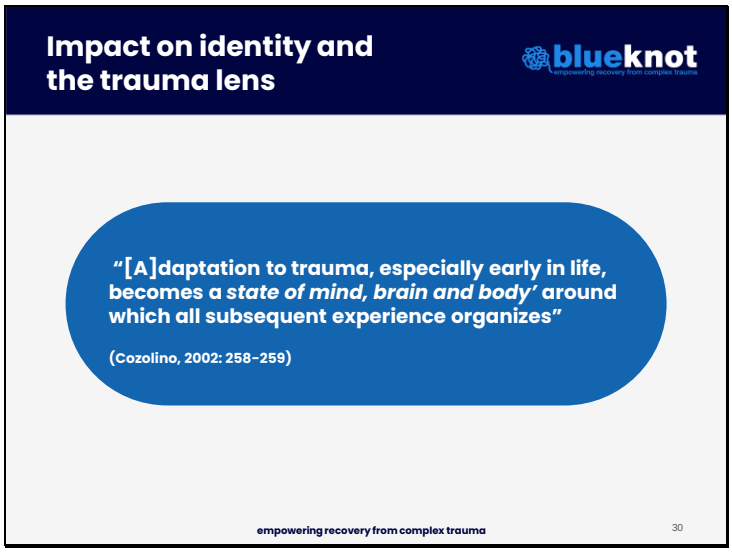
Impact on identity and the trauma lens
blueknot
"[A]daptation to trauma, especially early in life, becomes a *state of mind, brain and body'* around which all subsequent experience organizes"
(Cozolino, 2002: 258-259)
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Feeling shame
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In complex trauma, an inability to self regulate and regain self integrity in relationships means that shame frequently assumes an extreme or 'toxic' form. (Courtois & Ford, 2009)
It can present as an acute emotional state but also as ' a more fundamental and enduring aspect of an individuals' personality structure; in many traumatized persons the experience of shame essentially defines who they are'
(Practice Guidelines for Clinical Treatment of Complex Trauma BKF 2019 p263)
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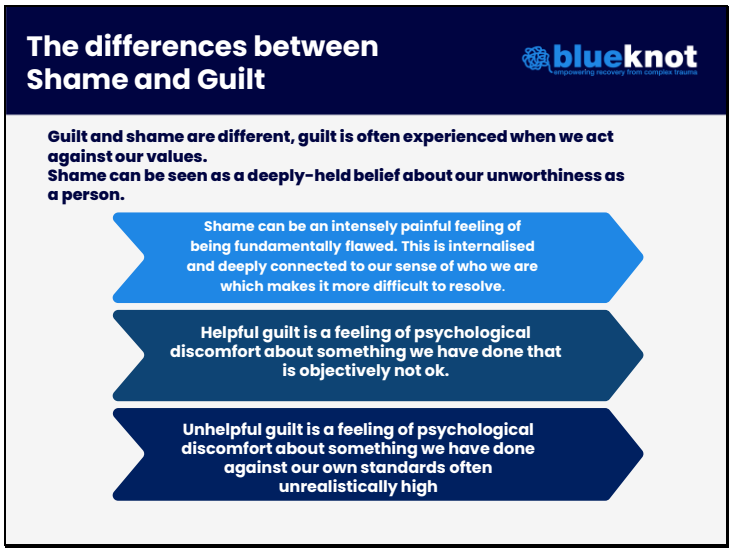
The differences between Shame and Guilt
blueknot
Guilt and shame are different, guilt is often experienced when we act against our values.
Shame can be seen as a deeply-held belief about our unworthiness as a person.
Shame can be an intensely painful feeling of being fundamentally flawed. This is internalised and deeply connected to our sense of who we are which makes it more difficult to resolve.
Helpful guilt is a feeling of psychological discomfort about something we have done that is objectively not ok.
Unhelpful guilt is a feeling of psychological discomfort about something we have done against our own standards often unrealistically high

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Holding the space
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Silence and secrecy can intensify feelings of shame. Offering a safe space with openness and an absence of judgement can be healing
It is important to walk alongside the person and be present and compassionate when they choose to be vulnerable or seek warmth and care
People respond differently to compassion – when highly self critical sometimes compassion can be anxiety provoking
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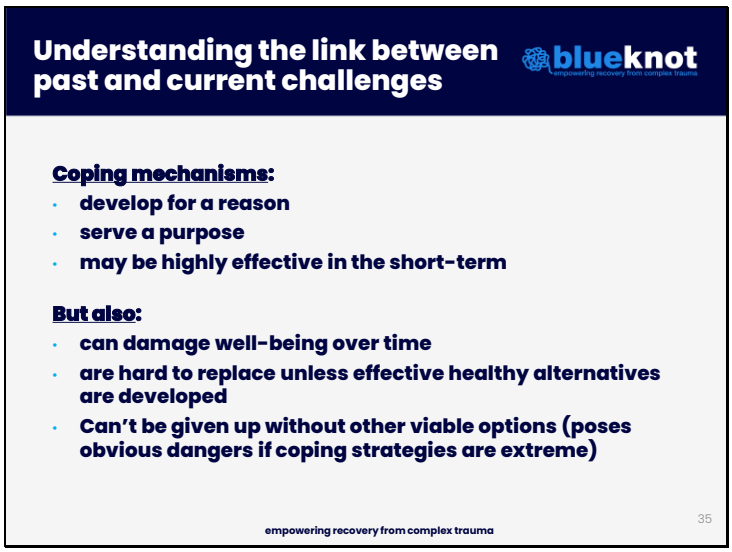
Understanding the link between past and current challenges
blueknot
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Coping mechanisms:
develop for a reason
serve a purpose
may be highly effective in the short-term
But also:
can damage well-being over time
are hard to replace unless effective healthy alternatives are developed
Can't be given up without other viable options (poses obvious dangers if coping strategies are extreme)
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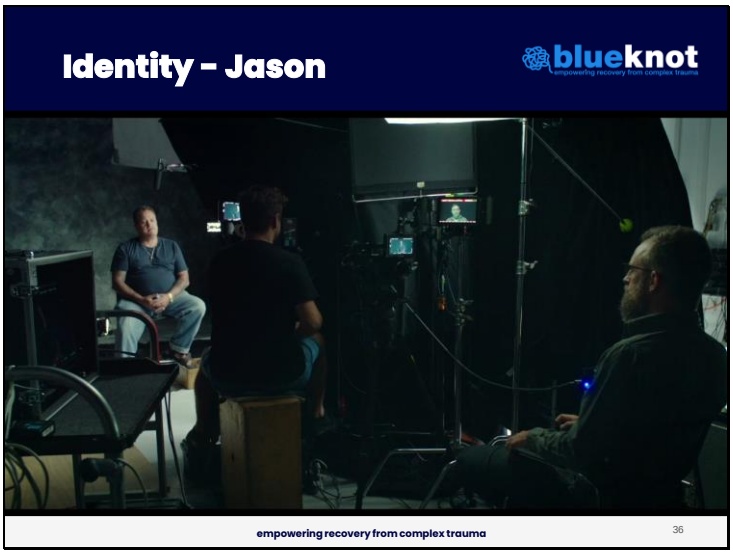

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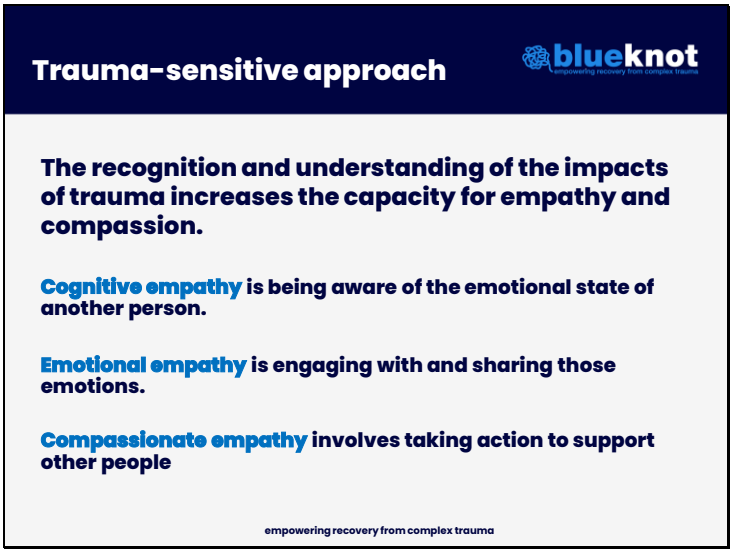
Trauma-sensitive approach
blueknot
The recognition and understanding of the impacts of trauma increases the capacity for empathy and compassion.
Cognitive empathy is being aware of the emotional state of another person.
Emotional empathy is engaging with and sharing those emotions.
Compassionate empathy involves taking action to support other people
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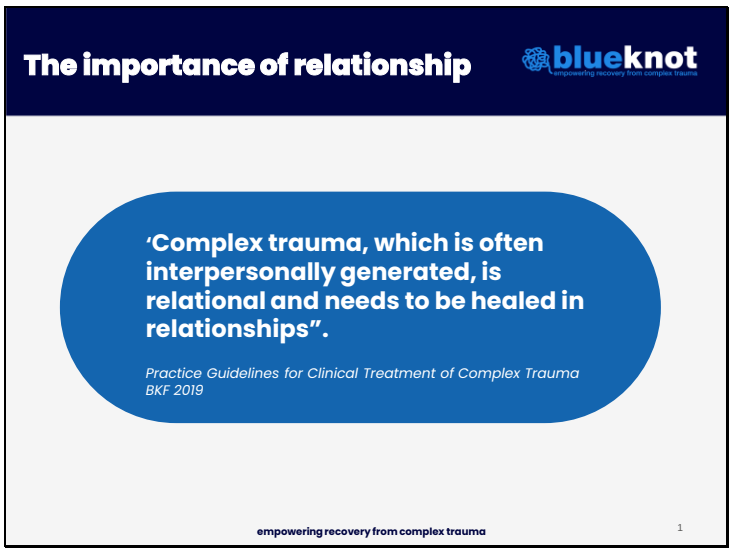
The importance of relationship
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'Complex trauma, which is often interpersonally generated, is relational and needs to be healed in relationships".
Practice Guidelines for Clinical Treatment of Complex Trauma BKF 2019
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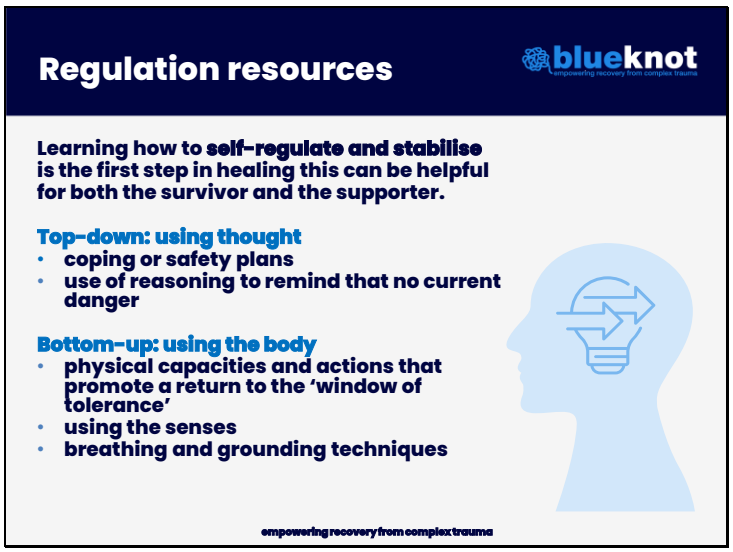
Regulation resources
blueknot
Learning how to self-regulate and stabilise is the first step in healing this can be helpful for both the survivor and the supporter.
Top-down: using thought
• coping or safety plans
• use of reasoning to remind that no current danger
Bottom-up: using the body
• physical capacities and actions that promote a return to the 'window of tolerance'
• using the senses
• breathing and grounding techniques
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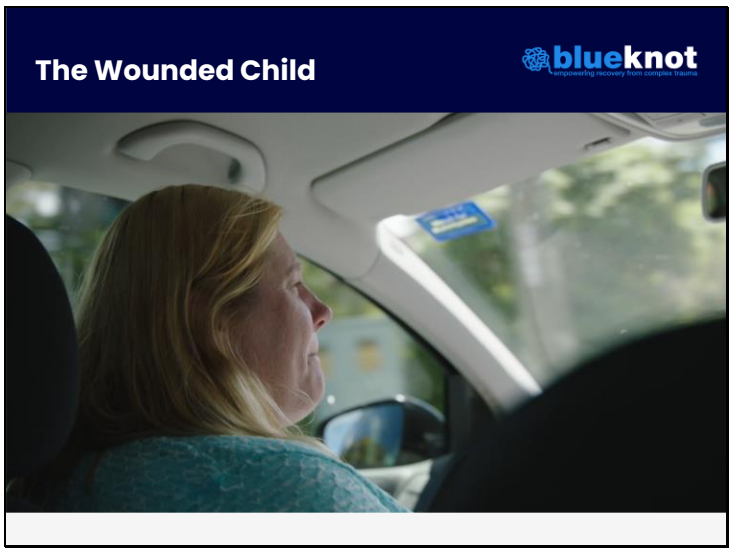

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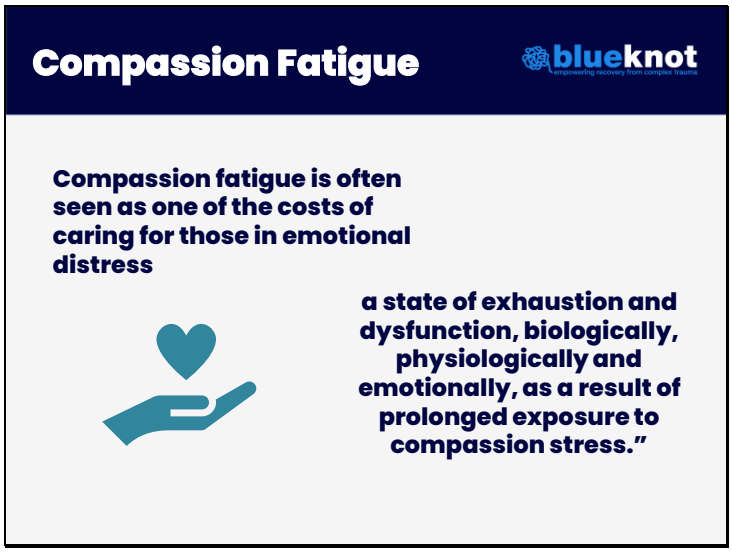
Compassion Fatigue
blueknot
Compassion fatigue is often seen as one of the costs of caring for those in emotional distress
a state of exhaustion and dysfunction, biologically, physiologically and emotionally, as a result of prolonged exposure to compassion stress."

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Resilience in caring for others
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Look for successes no matter how small
Focus on what has been overcome in the past
Identify strengths and potential
Find the resilience in your loved one and this will help to find yours
The witnessing of our loved ones overcoming adversity and demonstrating an immense capacity to heal has a positive effect.
When a focus can be maintained on what has been accomplished instead of the struggle that remains, a sense of purpose and motivation is created.

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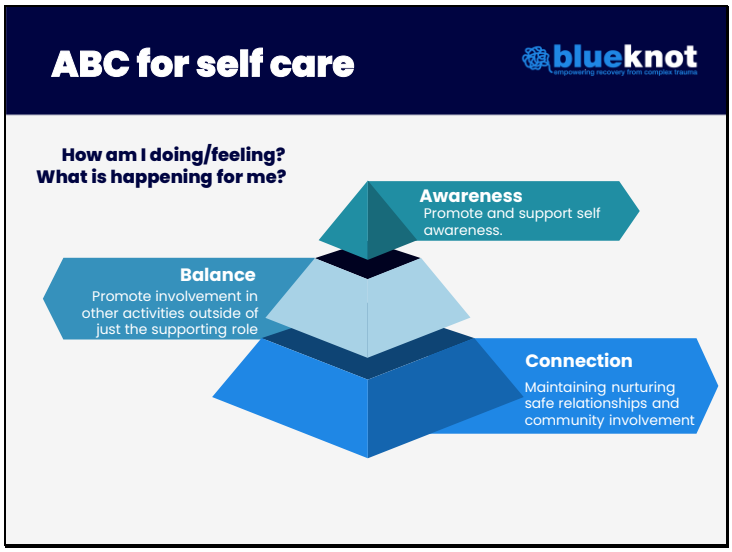
ABC for self care
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How am I doing/feeling?
What is happening for me?
Awareness
Promote and support self awareness.
Balance
Promote involvement in other activities outside of just the supporting role
Connection
Maintaining nurturing safe relationships and community involvement

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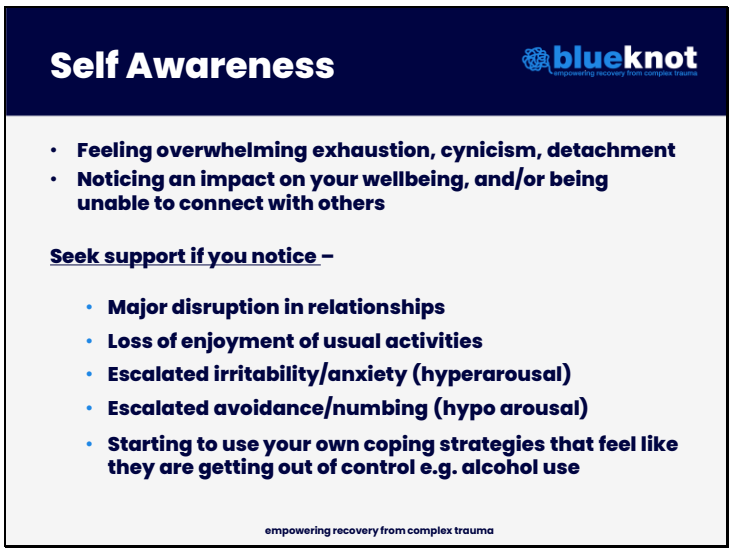
Self Awareness
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• Feeling overwhelming exhaustion, cynicism, detachment
• Noticing an impact on your wellbeing, and/or being unable to connect with others
Seek support if you notice –
• Major disruption in relationships
• Loss of enjoyment of usual activities
• Escalated irritability/anxiety (hyperarousal)
• Escalated avoidance/numbing (hypo arousal)
• Starting to use your own coping strategies that feel like they are getting out of control e.g. alcohol use
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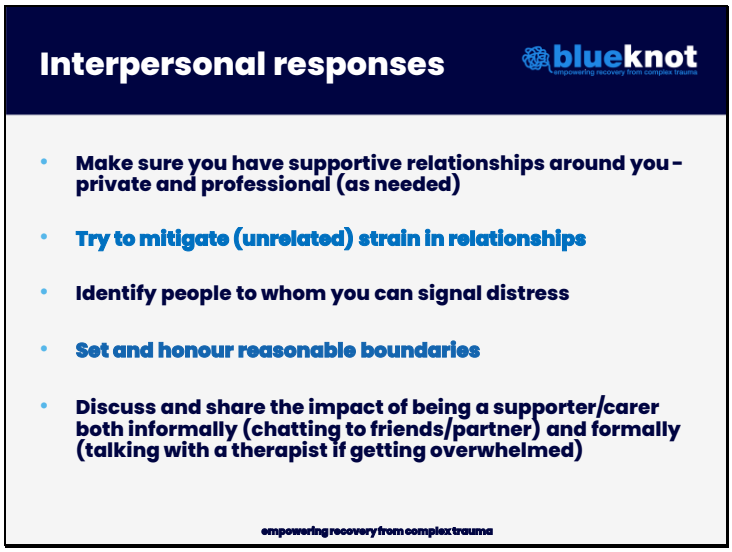
Interpersonal responses
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• Make sure you have supportive relationships around you - private and professional (as needed)
• Try to mitigate (unrelated) strain in relationships
• Identify people to whom you can signal distress
• Set and honour reasonable boundaries
• Discuss and share the impact of being a supporter/carer both informally (chatting to friends/partner) and formally (talking with a therapist if getting overwhelmed)
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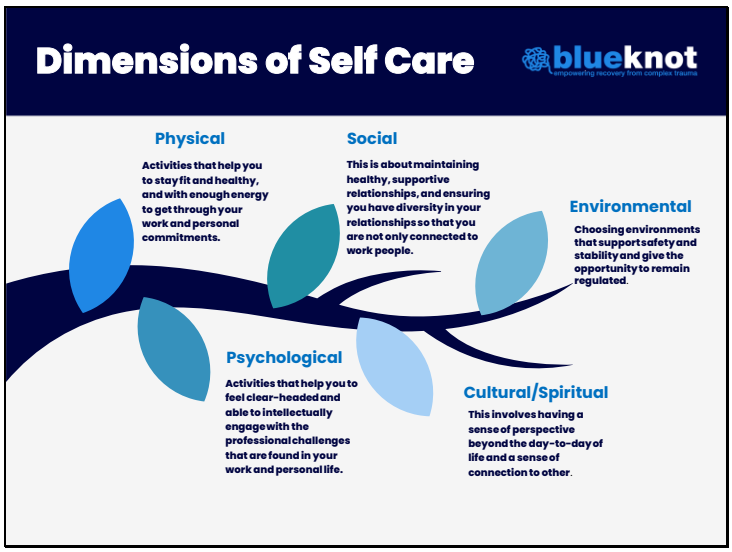
Dimensions of Self Care
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Physical
Activities that help you to stay fit and healthy, and with enough energy to get through your work and personal commitments.
Social
This is about maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and ensuring you have diversity in your relationships so that you are not only connected to work people.
Environmental
Choosing environments that support safety and stability and give the opportunity to remain regulated.
Psychological
Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the professional challenges that are found in your work and personal life.
Cultural/Spiritual
This involves having a sense of perspective beyond the day-to-day of life and a sense of connection to other.

Slide 50

Slide 51

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empowering recovery from complex trauma

Examples of Resource Building Strategies

Managing Arousal (anxiety, panic)

Always start with breathing, focus on breathing evenly, lengthening out the breath. Breathe slightly longer out than in (e.g. in for the count of 3 and out for the count of 5). Do this when feeling anxious, the earlier the better rather than wait for panic. Doing this daily will help lower the baseline for stress.

If panic sets in quickly and breathing is too hard, try a paper bag to breathe into and out with. You can also breathe into your cupped hands covering your nose and mouth. Repetitive movements can be very calming: try knitting, bouncing a ball, jumping on a trampoline, drumming, colouring in.

Self-soothing (when vulnerable or fragile)

This is good when we feel vulnerable or fragile and can include wrapping up in a blanket, cuddling a soft toy or pillow, hugging and getting a hug from someone you love, a warm bath, a foot massage, crying, drinking a small milo, hugging a heat pack, playing with the dog, cuddling the cat, etc.

Mindfulness (for getting better at managing anxiety)

Mindfulness practices help us connect to our bodies and become aware of how they are responding. Examples include: do I get a tight throat? A headache? Tight stomach? Hot, cold? Do I feel scared? Etc.

Mindfulness helps us learn to respond instead of react; it is empowering. It also helps with critical self-talk. Managing mindfulness books, websites and classes are available. Mindfulness is about noticing our body and though states, and not judging these states.

Managing Dissociation (for spacing out, feeling unreal)

Early detection works best before things get overwhelming. Grounding exercises such as pushing your feet into the ground, backside into the chair, standing up and stomping, pushing fingernails into the palms of your hands (your imagination is the limit here) helps gets us back into our bodies.

Orienting exercises such as, looking around the room and naming 5 things that begin with C, looking at objects and naming them, focusing on someone else talking, naming the day, helps us orient to the here and now. Other ideas include using cold water on your face, touching ice, flicking a rubber band on your wrist.

Remembering

Keep a list, make a plan of what you will do when you forget what it is that helps. Keep it on the fridge, on your phone, anywhere you can access easily.

Identifying Triggers (to know what sets me off)

Identifying from the 5 senses (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch) and other variables like season of the year, time of the year, time of the day, names, locations, etc, what might be triggering provides a 'knowing' that can then be worked with, avoided, confronted (titrated exposure). Identifying triggers is empowering and helps you prepare for them.

Psycho-education

Information when appropriate about some impacts of trauma on the body, emotions and thoughts can be useful and help normalise these impacts. Information about trauma written for survivors can be helpful. Some examples include:

- Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) booklet "Speaking the unspeakable", "Who can a man tell?"
- Rose's Place publication – "Riding the Storm"
- Blue Knot Foundation Resources - https://blueknot.org.au/resources/

Caution should be exercised that resources are not accessed when the person is in crisis as the resource may be re-traumatising.

Survivor Groups

Therapeutic and support groups specifically for survivors are often held through women's health services, community health services, public hospital, sexual assault services. Some hospitals also provide outpatient groups in skills development. There are also online forums for support. Groups can help people who are feeling socially isolated.

Your Own

Make a list of contact details for health professionals (GP, therapist, and/or psychologist), friends who understand, Blue Knot Foundation for specialist support (9am to 5pm AEST, 7 days a week), Lifeline for 24/7 support and crisis.

Dimensions of Self Care

Physical

Activities that help you to stay fit and healthy, and with enough energy to get through your work and personal commitments.

Social

This is about maintaining healthy, supportive relationships, and ensuring you have diversity in your relationships so that you are not only connected to work people.

Environmental

Choosing environments that support safety and stability and give the opportunity to remain regulated.

Psychological

Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage with the professional challenges that are found in your work and personal life.

Cultural/Spiritual

This involves having a sense of perspective beyond the day-to-day of life and a sense of connection to other.

Just acknowledging the importance of having a self-care plan, identifying what a plan may include, and developing a plan for self-care is only the first step. The most important step is implementing the plan. There are many potential challenges that may emerge when implementing a self-care plan. It is important to anticipate and examine what may impede self-care, or more specifically, impede the components of one's self-care plan and put a proactive plan in place to prevent or overcome these obstacles. This approach is similar to how a worker approaches working with clients towards achieving their goals.

Adapted from: Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatisation. Saakvitne, Pearlman & staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton 1996)

Use the table to identify some ways you can ensure self-care; it has to be relevant and specific to you. Build gradually and make it meaningful.

Psychological	Physical	Cultural/Spiritual	Environmental	Social

Key Concepts

What is trauma?

Trauma is defined as a "state of high arousal in which normal coping mechanisms are overwhelmed in response to the perception of threat" (Cozolino, 2002:270).

What is Complex Trauma?

"... in contrast to single incident trauma, complex trauma is cumulative, repetitive and largely interpersonally generated, and occurs in the context of family and intimate relationships..." (Blue Knot Foundation Clinical Guidelines, 2019)

What are the impacts of trauma?

Trauma can affect a person in numerous areas of their lives including:

- **Physical** – pain, startled, shut down, depression, AOD
- **Cognition** – thoughts, memory, beliefs, sense of self
- **Financial** – super, welfare
- **Behavioural** – coping mechanisms, adaptations, suicidality, self-harm
- **Development** – disability, brain development and integration, mental health
- **Emotional** – strong fluctuating, overwhelming, numb, distant
- **Social/Relational** – intimate connection, ability to relate, purpose
- **Spiritual** – meaning, morality, existence

What is Trauma-Informed Care?

"Trauma Informed Practice is not about the treatment of trauma or the symptoms, but rather a recognition that trauma experiences are a possibility for anyone" (Blue Knot Foundation Practice Guidelines, 2012).

Principles of Trauma-Informed Care

There are five principles of trauma-informed care:

- **Safety** – Physical, Emotional, Environmental, Cultural and Systemic
- **Trustworthiness** – Providing clarity and consistency within the service, establish and maintaining clear interpersonal boundaries
- **Choice** – Maximising client choice and control
- **Collaboration** – Maximising collaboration and sharing power
- **Empowerment** – Prioritising empowerment and skills

Vicarious Resilience

The witnessing of our loved ones overcoming adversity and demonstrating an immense capacity to heal has a positive effect. When a focus can be maintained on what has been accomplished instead of the struggle that remains, a sense of purpose and motivation is created.

- Look for successes no matter how small
- Focus on what has been overcome in the past
- Identify strengths and potential
- Find the resilience in your loved one and this will help to find yours

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BLUE KNOT RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Services

For counselling support please find our Helpline details below:

- Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service 1300 657 380: 9am-5pm 7 days AEST
- Support with Redress Applications: call 1300 657 380 or email redress@blueknot.org.au

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Offering Support

To join our Referral Database as an agency or health professional please see more at https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/contact-us/join-us/apply-to-blue-knot-referral-database/

We provide Educational Workshops for:

- Adult Survivors of Childhood Trauma and Abuse https://blueknot.org.au/survivors/survivor-workshops/
- Carers, Supporters, and Friends https://blueknot.org.au/supporters/self-care-for-supporters/

Further training for yourself or organisation:

Professional Development Training - Scheduled or In-house (we come to you) https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/professional-development-training/

Trauma Informed Supervision and Reflective Practice

https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/supervision-and-practice/

Organisational Change

https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/trauma-informed-organisational-change/

Resources

See our website: professionals.blueknot.org.au for all our Publications and Guidelines, Fact Sheets and Blue Knot Review our quarterly journal.

https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/resources/

Join us as a professional member to get a discount off further training and regular practice updates.

https://professionals.blueknot.org.au/contact-us/join-us/join-our-professional-community/